

[Mrs. Walter Emmett Hunnicutt]

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FOLKLORE - White Pioneer

Miss Effie Cowan, P. W.

McLennan County, Texas.

District No. 8

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Interview with Mrs. Walter Emmett Hunnicutt, Marlin, Texas.

"My husband, Judge Walter Emmett Hunnicutt, was born June 11, 1865, and he passed away in December 1936. He was Judge of Falls County for fourteen years, at different times. He was the son of Winfield S. Hunnicutt, who came to Texas in 1849 and established his rural home in the Blue Ridge community where he continued to reside until his death in 1908. Mr. Scott Hunnicutt was a member of Company B, of Waller's battalion, General Hardeman's brigade of the Confederate Army. He was a native of Tennessee before coming to Texas.

"The pioneer record for large families was almost broken by Judge Hunnicutt's father and mother, above mentioned. There were seventeen children, my husband being among this number. I married Walter Hunnicutt on December 12, 1894. My maiden name was Miss

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Mattie Keyser and I was the daughter of W. D. Keyser a pioneer stockman and farmer, and business man of Marlin, Texas. My father and mother came to Texas from Alabama.

"Judge Walter Hunnicutt was reared near the place of his birth in Falls County and there his education began. He spent some time in Southwestern College at Georgetown, Texas, and two years in the school of Mr. Chamber's in Kossee. For two years after leaving his school work, he devoted his life to farming but was not content and a long cherished idea of joining the legal profession caused him to enter the office of Goodrich and Clarkson, one of the most noted firms of that day of the Brazos Valley. 2 "Judge Hunnicutt was admitted to the bar at Marlin before Judge [Scott,?] being examined by Messrs Swan, Harlan and Boyles. Before he completed his preparation for the bar, he had the honor of being elected District Clerk of Falls County, and held this office for two years. He then began the practice of law in Marlin and pursued it for four years, then he was elected County Judge, and was re-elected at different times for this office, in all, serving fourteen years.

"He was Worshipful Master of the Masonic Lodge #152 at Marlin, and also a member of the [Moccabees?] and Woodmen of the World. For his church affiliations he was a Methodist. Our children are Emmett Jr., who resides with me and who married Miss Josephine Merriman of Lockport, New York, where he resided for twenty years before returning recently to our home in Marlin, where he is doing work for the government. Horace T., died in 1919, at the age of eighteen, these two boys were our only children.

["Before he completed his preparations for the bar, he had the honor of being elected District Clerk for Fall County and held this office for two years, then began the practice of law in Marlin and for four years followed his profession. Then he was elected County Judge; he served in this capacity for fourteen years.?"

"During Judge Hunnicutt's life as Judge there were many interesting things which happened in our county and town. He lived to see it grow from a small village to the

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present [??] where many come for the healing benefit of the Marlin hot water. Judge Hunnicutt died in December of 1936.

"I will try to tell you about some of the first families of the Blue Ridge community where Judge Hunnicutt's father settle in 1849, and the way they lived at that time. The Forbes family came to the 3 [?] from Tennessee. Dr. and Mrs. Robert Forbes arrived in the early fifties. His son, Dr. L. D. Forbes, graduated from the New Orleans school of medicine, and practiced both on the Ridge and in Marlin. The older Forbes built their home on the spot where Mrs. Forbes lives today. They built in the fifties, long before the Civil War. Aside from his practice of medicine, Mr. L. D. Forbes invented a mechanical cotton gin, where the feeders automatically carries the cotton to the gin-saws or units. Near the Forbes and Barclay homes there was located a mule-driven gin. This gin was across the road from the Swinnes place, owned by Bill [?] and later, by Ed Vann. It was moved down near Big Creek and used until discarded for a newer [?] model.

"Another early family to settle on the Ridge was the Barclay family whose [?] was known as the "Squire" and they lived in a log house on the spot a few hundred yards north of where Hancock's store stands today. Farther north east on the Ridge the Garretts lived. They came from Tennessee about 1849. The old home, with some improvement, stands today, a silent reminder of those early days. The family history is one of [?], destiny and accomplishment. The original head of the family was Thomas Garrett. His children were Jasper, Mary Elizabeth, Cynthia Ann and Catherine, Jim, [?], Sarah, Tome and Rennie. All are linked with history and development of this section of the country.

"As we follow the Ridge in the location then of what is now Stranger, the next old home place is that of the Brothers family. Jesse Brothers with his wife and children came from Tennessee to Texas in the late fifties. They brought their slaves with them. Like so many of their 4 neighbors, they sought new fortunes in the land [?] their former fellow-[?], Sam Houston, and found a lot. They also sought relief from the troubled question of slavery; the Brothers family, with their slaves, camped under the big oak tree that stands today

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in the middle of the road as you approach the Ridge in the section now known as [?]. They settled near the Barclay family who kindly [???] stock for meat for the family. [?] men went as far as [?] County looking at the country; they returned to the Ridge an' bought land on the [?] hill overlooking Big Creek and began to build their homes. Grandpa Jesse Brothers served in the Civil [?], returned [?] on a furlough and died before the war ended. He left several sons, among them William, [?], and Jesse, Junior. His sons and grandsons followed farming for [?] occupation.

"[?] South, along the Ridge, lived [??], [?] son, Joel, was supposed to be the first official [??] in the community [????]. [?] is [?] by the older settlers [?] the [????] a quiet friendly old lady with a wealth of lore concerning early days of Texas. We came to this section in the early days with [??] family, her relatives. The old [?] log house is still standing, but has been covered with weather-boarding.

"One of Granny Moffett's daughters married Quinton [?]. Vann who farmed with [?] on the Little Brazos River. There are many descendants of the [?] family, whose head was William [?]. They came to the Ridge in an early day and William Erskine married Miss Mary Elizabeth Garrett. They built near the little church-school house where the present Methodist church is at Stranger. Frank [?] lives in the spacious old Erskine home in Stranger. 5 "Still farther south-west, on the Ridge, is the old Eddins' home. John Eddins and family came to Texas from Alabama in 1860; and, after a short stay in Marlin, bought a farm lying close to Big Creek, in a valley between a ridge of hills. The farm now belongs to the Jesse Brothers' estate. Jasper Garrett persuaded Eddins to build his home up on the Ridge about the time the Civil War began. Eddins bought sufficient ground from the Garretts to build the home. Mr. Eddins and his sons had to walk a mile across the sandy ridge to get to his farm, leaving his wife and daughter, Kate to keep house.

"Near the Eddins home was the home of Hodge and also of Swinnes. And nor far away was the pioneer home of Allen Morrell, a son of the Baptist preacher, Rev. Z. N. Morrell. Two years ago, all that remained of the Morrell home, a heap of logs, was moved to

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the Falls County Old Settlers Association grounds and there were built into a log cabin in remembrance of those early pioneers. This old Morrell home stood on a spot later occupied by the home of Bill Fannin; then Grady Blair bought the place. It stood on top of the Ridge, overlooking Big Creek Valley and from it could be seen one of the most picturesque views in the county. For miles one could see the farms, dotting the countryside, with little spots of grass land and trees scattered about. Through this country runs old Big Creek which flows into the Brazos River. East of this Morrell home is the town of Marlin.

“Mr. W. T. Fannin came to the Ridge in 1875 and bought the Moffett home; later it was sold to the Blairs. On the Ridge, southwest of the Moffett home was the home of the Prices. W. A. Price, Junior, a son of the pioneer lives in the old Price home today. 6 In 1882, Dr. and Mrs. J. C. Shaw came to the Ridge to live and settled east of the Price home. Dr. Shaw served fifteen months in the Alabama Calvary of the Confederate Army. He was a native of Alabama and his wife, Miss Nannie Sygart, was a Tennessean. Dr. Shaw practiced on the Ridge for many years, then moved to Marlin, where he died. His son, Dr. Frank Shaw succeeded him in his practice.

“About a mile south of the Stranger store, [?] Rogers and John Marlin settled a few years after the battle of San Jacinto. The Rogers family settled on the Ridge, while the Marlin family settled at a place known as [?], a few miles south of the present town of Marlin. The Rogers and the Merlin families came from Tennessee, following the footsteps of Sam Houston.

“The Kay home and store were built where old Mrs. Gertrude Hancock lived and was south east of Stranger. Mr. Kay was a farmer and devoted church worker. He organized the first Sunday School at Stranger and was superintendent until his death. He was an unofficial post master before the rural mail service was established. On business trips to Kosse, he would call for the people's mail and bring it to his store, where they came to get it. Mrs. Kays' son, by a former marriage, was Hollman Hancock. He married Miss Gertrude

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Garrett, daughter of the pioneer family of Garrets, of Blue Ridge. [?], Sanford Hancock, still owns and operates the store at Stranger on the Ridge.

"It is difficult to give the dividing line between Stranger and the Reagan community. The Stranger community on the Ridge can be seen for miles from the Waco-Marlin state highway. In fair weather, there is always a deep blue atmosphere over it, hence the name of Blue Ridge. The old Hunnicutt home stands overlooking the valley on the Ridge stands today just as it stood when Winfield Scott Hunnicutt located 7 there in 1849. Additions have been made to the house and the logs covered with weather-boarding lumber. Two of his sons still live in the old house.

"You may stand on the Ridge and look westward where you can see the broad valley as it abruptly drops down below you with a ravine between the Ridge and the valley. Farms, farm houses and the green woods of Big Creek, dot this valley. In the fall of the year cotton pickers can be seen swinging to and fro, gathering the fleecy staple. Tall trees, sloping hill and beautiful prairies form a never-to-be-forgotten picture. About ten miles to the west can be seen the tops of buildings in Marlin, and a few miles beyond Marlin, one can see the trees which border the Brazos River.

"The Ridge gradually slopes south west to the little town of Reagan. Here is a small creek, named Salt Branch and on its banks many of the early settlers sleep the last sleep, unmindful of the changes wrought by Father Time since they came, in their ambition to build new homes, to the new state of Texas.

"To the east, lies the town of Kosse, where the Houston and Texas Central Railroad came through in the seventies. Some of the early Ridge settlers moved over to Kosse for the benefit of the railroad facilities. Among them was Dr. Toland, who came to the Ridge as a young doctor. He, like Dr. Poindexter, boarded at Granny William's. They could tell many a story of those early days. I remember one story that they loved to tell. All the people met at the little church to pray for rain. One woman came with her coat and umbrella, prepared

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for an answer to their prayers. They brought their lunch and spent the day. Alone in the afternoon, the sky [?] over-cast and by late afternoon, it began to rain and what a rain fell! It rained so hard that all the creeks got out of banks and the crowd 8 had to spend the night in the little school-church house and they spent the night giving thanks for their answer to prayer. But only one came prepared for an answer to their prayers. It was one of the oldest members of the flock and she declared that in time gone by, the way to receive an answer to prayer, was to have the faith to be ready for it.

“The Pools and the Bells were other families whose names are indelibly written into the history of the Blue Ridge settlement. The Bell family came from Tennessee in the [?]; they had a large family and took an active part in the affairs of the community. Two sons served in the Civil War and one had lost his life in the war with Mexico, along with fifteen other men from [?] county. Other prominent early families were the Arnetts, Mayes, Herron, Nichols, Vann, Hickman, Darden, [?], Saxon, Clawson and many others who lived farther south on the Ridge. About 1870, two single men came from Tennessee; they were Henry Clay [Cowan?] and Jim Owens. Mr. Cowan married Miss Laura Wyche, who was teaching school near Bremond. She was a daughter of Dr. George Wyche who settled in the settlement known so Bedias, near Anderson, Texas, in the days before the Civil War. Jim Owens married Miss Betty Robertson, who came from a large family who lived on the lower Ridge. The Owenses made their home at Reagan, where they reared a family. The Cowan family, with others from the Ridge, moved in the early seventies to what was then known as Willow Springs, and is now the town of Mart.

“It is difficult to give even a brief sketch of those early settlers, but the Stranger settlement dates back to the days before the Mexican War. The Hunnicutts, the Barnes, Cornelisons, Williams, 9 Mitchells, and others who settled on Blue Ridge at Woodland, had a definite part in the building of the Stranger community. There were other communities on the Ridge, and all are [?] linked with the history of Falls county. In this outline, mention only is

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made of those who lived nearest the place where the school and church were held. It was many years later that the place secured a post office and was given the name of Stranger.

“Dr. Forbes had a gin a few hundred yards from his home. Later, Thomas Kerchain built a store and another man built a blacksmith shop. So, to a spot near the [??], came the first essentials of a community center, i. e., a doctor, a gin, a blacksmith shop, and a store. Kay's store was located where the present Hancock store stands today. Kerchain and others saw the advantage of having a post office up on the hill, and they wrote the government for blanks on which to make application for a post office. Kerchain received those blanks, worked out all the details and then they made their way to the nearest place to receive a hearing, probably Waco or Marlin.

“According to local history, the hearing was favorable and the need for a post office was established. And, the story goes, that the name the applicants suggested did not meet with the approval of those who held the hearing and that one of the officials, with some impatience, turned to Kerchain, who spoke English brokenly, and said: “Come, come! Can't you think of a suitable name?” To which Kerchain hesitantly replied, “Well, I don't know. I'm just a stranger in the community.” To this the official replied, “Well, that will do — Stranger,” and he wrote the word “Stranger” upon the application blank which went to Washington and was approved. So this is the story of how Stranger, on Blue Ridge, got its name.

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“My parents, Mr. & Mrs. W. D. Keyser emigrated to Texas before the War Between the States, and settled in Falls , County , where they reared their children to maturity. On the 12 th day of December 1894 I married Walter Emmett Hunnicutt , who was also born in Falls county June 11th, 1865. He was a son of Winfield Scott Hunnicutt who settled on Blue Ridge in 1849, emigrating from the state of Tennessee, where he was widely known as a surveyor. He was also a member of Company B. of Waller's battalion, General Hardeman's brigade of the Confederate army.

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"The pioneer record for large families were almost broken by this family of Winfield cott Scott Hunnicutt, father of my husband , Walter Emmett. There were seventeen children in all and all lived to reach the age of maturity. My husband Wlateral Emmett, received his preliminary education in the Blue Ridge public school. Then attended the Southwestern College at Georgetown Texas. And previous to this was a pupil of a Mr Chambers of Kosse. After finishing school he devoted his time to farming for two years. ot Not being content with this life he entered the law office of Goodrich and Clarkson at Marlin and began reading law. He was admitted to the bar by Judge Scott of Marlin , after standing his examination under Messrs Swan, Harlan, and Boyles , attorneys of Marlin.

"before he completed his preperation for the bar he had the honor of being elected District Clerk for Falls[,?] county , and held this office for two years, then began the practice of law in Marlin and pursued it [??????] 2 for four years , then was elected [?] County Judge and was [?] re-elected at different times for this office, serving in all fourteen years. He was Worshipful Master of the Masonic Lodge NO. 152 at Marlin and also a member of the Maccabees and Woodman of the World. For his church affiliation he was a Methodist. Our children are Emmmett Junior who resides with me and married Miss Josephine Merriman of Lockport, New York, where he resided for twenty years before returning recently to Marlin where he is now doing government work. Horace T . our other son, passed away in 1919 , at the age of 18 years. These two boys were our only children.

"During Judge Hunnicutts life as Judge there were many interesting things which happened in our county and town. He lived to see it grow from a small village to the present notable health resort where many are brought here for the benefit of the Marlin Hot water. Judge Hunnicutt died in December of 1936.

"I will try to tell you of some of the first families of the Blue Ridge community where Judge Hunnicutt's father settled in 1849, and the way they lived at that time. First there were the Forbes family. The Forbes family came to the Ridge from Tennessee. Dr and Mrs Robert Forbes arrived in the early fifties. His son Dr L. [?] D . Forbes graduated from the New

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Orleans school of medicine , and practice both on the Ridge and at Marlin. “ The elder Forbes built their home on the spot where Mrs Forbes lives today, this was in the fifties , long before the Civil War. Aside [?] from his practice of medicine Dr L.D. Forbes invented a mechanical cotton gin where the feeders automatically carries the cotton to the gin saws or / units. 3 “Near the Forbes and Barclay home was a mule driven gin located across the road from the Swinnes place , owned by Bill Erskine and later by Ed Vann , where it was moved down near Big Creek and used until discarded for the newer model.

“Another early family was the Barclay family. The head of the family was known as “Squire” and they lived in a log house on the spot a few hundred yards north of where [?] Hancock's store stands today. Farther north-east on the Ridge were the Garretts , who came from Tennessee about the year 1849. The old house with some improvement stands today, a silent reminder of those early days. The family history is one of romance, destiny and accomplishment. The original head of the family was Thomas Garrett His children were Jasper, Mary Elizabeth, Cynthia Ann, and Catherine, Jim, Rhoda, Sarah, Tom and Fennie. All are linked with the history and development of this section.

“Following the Ridge in the location of what is now Stranger, the next is the old home place of the Brothers family. Jesse Brothers , wife and children , came from Tennessee in the late fifties , bringing their slaves with them. Like so many of their neighbors they sought new fortune fortune's in the land where their former fellow Tennesseesans, Sam Houston, had found a place. Also they sought relief from troubled times over the slavery [?] question preceding the War Between the States. The Brothers and their slaves camped under the big oak tree that stands today in the middle of the road as you approach the Ridge in the section now known as Stranger. This was near the Barclay home and these good people were kind to the 4 Forbes family furnishing them stock for meat for the family [?] and their [?] slaves . They finally , after looking around as far as Leon County, returned and bought land on the high hill overlooking Big Creek and began their lives in this section. Grandpa Jesse Brothers went to the [?] War between the States in the sixties and returned home on a furlough , where he died before the war ended. He left several sons, William, Boog,

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an and Jesse, Jr. who extended their farming interest to succeeding generations. Mrs Brothers married W.H.W. Williams and their only daughter married A.W. Eddins of San Antonio, Texas. " Farther south along the Ridge lived Granny Moffett, whose son Joel was supposed to be the first official mail carrier (for the community of Stranger) on the Ridge. She is remembered by the older settlers of the Ridge and Marlin as being a quiet friendly old lady, with a lore of stories of the early days of Texas. She came to this section in the early days suppoosedly with the Hodge family , since they were near relatives and lived close by. The Hodge home stands today built of logs, but the logs have long since been covered with weather boarding.

"A daughter of Granny Moffett married Quinton H. Vann who [?] was associated with the Erskines in farming on the Brazos (Little) bottom. There are many descendants of the Erskine family whose head was William [?] Erskine, who came to the Ridge and married Miss Mary Elizabeth Garrett and they made their home near the first school and church combined, on the site of the present Methodist -Presbyterian church. [at Stranger?] There are the Frank Erskines who with their children have lived for many years in the spacious old Erskine home, a familiar sight to all who pass thro' the town of Stranger. 5 "Still farther south-west on the Ridge is the Eddins place. John Eddins and familu family arrived from Alabama in 1860 and after a short stay in Marlin , bought a farm lying close to Big Creek , in a valley between a ridge of hills . The farm now belongs to the Jesse Brothers estate. Jasper Garrett persuaded Mr Eddins to build his home up on the Ridge about the time the War between the States began. He bought sufficient ground from the arretts Garretts to build the home and there he built the old Eddins home. Mr Eddins and his boys walked a mile across the sandy ridge to the farm and the mother and daughter, Kate, kept house and prepared the meal .

"Near the old Eddins home stood the Hodge and the Swimnea [?] homes . These families names re are linked also with the early settlers of the Ridge. But I must hasten on with these early settlers families. Not far from the above mentioned homes was the former pioneer home of Allen Morrell, a son of the pioneer baptist preacher Rev. Z.N. Morrell.

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Two years ago all that remained of the old Morrell home was a heap of logs which was moved to the Falls County Old Settlers Association grounds and built into a log cabin in remembrance of those early pioneers. This old home stood on the spot later to be the Bill [?] Fannin, then the Grady Hair place, on top of the Ridge overlooking Big Creek Valley, and here is one of the most [?] picturesquis views in this country. For miles one can see the farms, dotted with a little grass land and trees, through which runs, old Big Creel on its way to join the Brazos River, and over to the east lies the town of Marlin. "On the old Morrell home site has since stood the Hair, the Fannin, home also. The Hair family were from Alabama. 6 "The Fannins had owned the Hair place buying from the Moffets. Mr W.T. Fannin came to the Ridge in 1875. Following the ridge south-west- was the Price home where the son Mr and Mrs W.A. Price Jr. live today , carrying on the work in the same place where the elder Price cast his lot with his young wife , (who after a career filled with romance and adventure in the Civil War times and reconstruction days) , located here and reared their family.

"East-ward from the Price place in 1882 came Dr and Mrs J.C. Shaw to live. Mr Shaw was from Alabama , serving fifteen months in the Alabama Calvalry. Confederate Army. His wife was a Tennessean a Miss Nannie Syptert. Dr Shaw [?] practiced medicine many years and later moved to Marlin where the elder Dr passed on to his reward and their son Dr Frank succeeded him in his practice.

"About a mile south of the Stranger store, came Larkin Rogers, and John Marlin , a few years after the battle of San Jacinto. The Rogers family settled on the Ridge while the Marlin family settled at the place known as Bucksport, a few miles south of the present town of Marlin. The Rogers and Marlin families came out of Tennessee, according to the records , out of admiration for their fellow Tennesseean and friend, Sam Houston. The story of John Marlin and the Indian Massacres on the Marlin family and the naming of Falls county is another story.

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"The ay Kay home and store were located where the old Mrs Gertrude Hancock home south-east of where Stranger store stands today. Mr Kay was a farmer and devoted church worker. He organized the first Sunday [?] School at Stranger 7 and was superintendant until his death. He was a sort of un-official post-master before the rural mail service came this way. When on his business trips to Kosse he woud call for the people's mail and bring it to his [?] store, where they came for it. Mrs Kay's son by a [?] former marraige was Hollman Hancock , who married Miss Gertrude Garrett, a daughter of the pioneer family of Garretts of Blue Ridge. Mrs Hancocks son, Sanford, still owns the store at Stranger on the Ridge. " It is difficult to give the dividing line of the Ridge and just which part the families lived [?] farther south in the Reagan community were a number of early settlers which I will give you later perhaps. The ridge where the Stranger community is can be seen for miles from the state high way to [?] Marlin from Waco, Texas. In fair weather it is always a deep blue atmosphere , hence the name of Blue Ridge. [?] The old Hunnicutt home stands overlooking the valley on the ridge today just as it stood when Winfield Scott Hunnicutt located here in 1849, with the exception of the additions which have been made and the old logs covered with a modern weather / boarding lumber. In it there still live two of his sons.

"You may stand on yhe [?] Ridge and look westward. See the broad valley as it abruptly drops down below you with a ravine between the Ridge and the valley. See the farm houses dotted here and there[?] The green woods [?] of Big Creek valley and in the fall of the year see the cotton pickers as they swing to and fro' gathering the fleecy staple. Tall trees— Hills — and prairie forming a picture to remember. While over about ten miles to the west see the tops of the buildings of the town of Marlin , and a few miles beyond Marlin one can see the trees which border the Brazos river, 8 "To the south following the ridge as it gradually [?] slope's south-west towards the little town of Reagan on one can see the old Salt Branch , a small creek , near by many of the early settlers sleep the last sleep unmindful of the changes which Father Time has wrought since they first came in their ambition for omes homes in the new state of Texas.

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“To the east lies the town of Kosse where the Houston and Texas Central came through in the seventies. Some of the early ridge settlers moved over to this town for the benefit of the rail-road facilities. Among them was Dr Toland now living at Kosse who came to the ridge as a young doctor and he , too , like Dr Poindexter boarded at Granny Williams. [They?] could tell many a story of those early days. One I remember of how they met at the little church and prayed for rain, one woman came with her coats and umbrella prepared for the answer to their prayers. They brought their lunch and spent the day.

“Along in the afternoon the sky became overcast with clouds, and by late afternoon it began to rain and did it rain? Well it rained so hard the creeks all were up so the crowd had to spend the night in the little school- church house and there they spent the time giving thanks for their answer to prayer. But only one had the faith to come prepared, and it seems that it was Granny Williams or perhaps Granny Cornelison or [?] Moffett[?] Any way it was one of the oldest members of the flock, who declared that in time gone by the way to receive answer to their prayer was to have the faith to be ready for it. 9 “Other families whose names are indelibly written in the history of the Blue Ridge settlement are those of Bell, who came from Tennessee in the fifties and the Pools. The bells had a large family and they had much to do with the building of this community. Two sons served in the Civil War and one lost his life in the war with Mexico along with fifteen others from Falls county. Others are the Arnetts, Hayes, Herron, Nichols, Vann, Hickman, darden, Loggins, Saxon, and Clawson and many others who lived farther south on the idge Ridge . About the year 1870 two single young men came from Tennessee, they were Henry Clay cowan and Jim Owens. Mr Cowan married a Miss Laura Wyche who was teaching school near [?] Bremond . A daughter of Dr George Wyche who settled in the settlement known as Bedias, near Anderson , Texas , in the days before the Civil War. Mr Ownes married a Miss Betty Robertson, from a large family of the lower Ridge and they made their home at Reagan, Texas where they reared a family. The Cowan family with others from the Ridge moved in the early senties seventies (70's) to the then Willow Springs community, later known as Mart. “ It is difficult to give even a brief sketch of those early settlers, but

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the above settlement date back to the days before the Mexican War. The Hunnicutt's the Barnes, Cornelisons, Williams , Mitchells and others who settled on Blue Ridge at [?] Woodland — had a definite part in making the Stranger community. There were other communities on the Ridge and all are inseparably linked with the making of Falls county. In this outline , mention is made of those who lived nearest the place where the school and church was held, and it was many years later that the place secured a post-office and the name of Stranger given to it. 10 “As I mentioned before [?] Dr Forbes had a gin a few hundreds yards from his home. Then a man set up a black-smith shop and another built a store near by. His name was Thomas Kerchain. So to a spot near the Forbes home came the first essentials of a community center, a doctor, a gin, a black smith shop and a store. Kay's store was located where the present Hancock store stands today. Up on the hill Kerchain and others saw the advantage of a post-office and wrote the government for blanks for making the application for one. He received them and worked out all the details of filling them out. They then made their way to the nearest place to receive a hearing, probably to Marlin or Waco.

“According to the story the hearing was favorable and the need for a post office was established. And the story goes that the name the applicants suggested did not meet with the approval of those who gave the hearing and one of the officials with some impatiens turned to Kerchain who spoke broken English and said” Come, Come[!?] Cant you think of a suitable name? To which Kerchain hesitated and replied “Well, I dont know. I'm just a stranger in the community”. To this the official replied, “Well that will do— “Stranger” and he wrote the word , Stranger , upon the application blank which went to Washington and was finally approved. So this is the story of how Stranger, on the Blue Ridge , got its name.